

Have a safe trip home. Have a great summer. God bless all of you because you are special, special folks. I wish you all the luck in the world in whatever you choose to do.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) to come up as he wants to address the group. This is a perfect example. The gentleman and I are very good friends. We do not agree very much on about anything, but one thing we agree on is the service that you all conduct and the honor of this institution and the hard work that everybody puts into it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS). I know you really want to listen to one more speech because you have not heard enough speeches since you have been here.

It is a pleasure to be here. I particularly thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for their good work; to Wren, to all of your supervisors, your new supervisor, Joy Malleen, and to all of you especially for your public service at a very young age.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) says this is an almost 200-year tradition of pages working in the greatest legislative body in the world, and this is an achievement you can look back on. It is an achievement especially because if you are like Omar Halabi in my district, if you are like most people here, I think, it was not by accident you ended up here. You are obviously achievers at home. Many of you went through a competitive process to get here. You obviously have shown self-discipline; you are self-starters. You already have the kinds of values and the kind of work ethic that will get you ahead as you go off to college, and you go off in to the military and you go off into the workforce.

I have watched Omar from Brecksville, Ohio, in my district and watched some others of you and talked to you, for some of you it is a semester, for others as Omar got to re-up as they say. I have gotten to see the personal growth and the kind of growing into the whole idea of public service.

My short remarks, I will just say that I hope when you go home, I heard the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) talking about young people not registering to vote in very high numbers. I hope you will go home, those of you that are 18 now or soon will be 18 or have plenty of friends that are 18, that you make it your mission to register your friends to vote, to get involved, whichever side you want to be on in the Presidential race this year, whichever side you want to be on on any number of political campaigns at home in community service and encourage people, as President Theodore Roosevelt, my favorite Republican

said, "Get in the arena. That is where you really make a difference."

You have already been in the arena by working in this legislative body, by serving the Congress, by serving your country. You can accelerate that and go home and build on that and really be in the arena every day, back at school, back in the workplace, in the military, at home doing what you already know how to do. You have the leadership skills. You have the interpersonal skills. I hope that you will share those skills with people all over the 50 States of this country and get into the arena and do it.

Congratulations to all of you.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I want to send my regards for the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE), who has visited with many of you. He is receiving an award down at the EPA. I know he is trying to get back here on time, but it looks like he will not. As you know, he has been very close to the program. He will get a chance to extend his remarks.

To whom much is given, much is expected. And I think that is really is summary of what the Members who have come on the floor have attempted to say in their own way. We thank you for your service. We have all bled a little bit this year. We have all sweated a little bit this year. We have all cried a little bit this year, not only the pages but of course, of course, the dorm staff, the school staff, the floor staff. Make sure you go and tell them to thank the adult supervision folks who have been so patient to get us through this year.

Again, from the House of Representatives, from the Speaker, from the minority leader, thank you for your service. Have a great graduation tomorrow. May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America. You are now dismissed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Farewell to the Pages 1-minute speech.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues in recognizing the Congressional Pages that will be ending their term of service this week. I would also like to commend Congressman SHIMKUS and Peggy Sampson for all of their hard work.

The House Pages have made up the critically important support staff that has kept the House floor running smoothly for over 200 years.

The 2003–2004 full-school year Pages were selected from hundreds of applicants, following an incredibly competitive process that scrutinizes their individual achievements in academics, leadership, and commitment to social and civic service.

Page duties include delivering all types of correspondence and legislative materials throughout the Capitol and House Office Build-

ings, answering phones in the Members' Cloakrooms, relaying messages, flying flags over the Capitol, and preparing the House floor for session.

These pages have spent their entire junior year of high school in Washington, D.C., living, taking classes and working for the House.

The typical day of a Page begins very early at 5:45 am or 6:00 am to eat breakfast prior to attending classes for school at 6:45 am. At 10:00 am, their legislative workday begins and lasts until the House adjourns in the evening; and sometimes into the early morning hour.

These individuals have demonstrated their true commitment to playing an important role in our Nation's future by learning and working in the nation's capitol.

We honor those Pages that have shown the same generosity of spirit, depth of intelligence, and capacity for human service that is so important to leaders.

These exceptional students have consistently displayed their dedication, intelligence and concern throughout their time as a Page in Congress. They stand out among their peers not only because of their many achievements, but also the disciplined manner in which they meet all challenges. Although they have already accomplished a great deal, these young people possess unlimited potential.

The House Pages are young men and women of character, ambition, and initiative, who have made a significant contribution to the United States House of Representatives and already learned well the value of hard work and commitment. Their efforts and dedication is very much appreciated and our best wishes bestowed upon them in all of their future endeavors that I am sure for some will include elected office including Congress. I suspect all will be leaders.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, we extend our thanks and highest praise and congratulations to each Congressional Page.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the

time of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

CONFUSING MEDICARE CARD GAME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this week America's seniors and disabled Americans can use the new prescription drug discount card created by last year's Republican Medicare law. This card program has not exactly been met with a resounding "yes." Nationwide fewer than 500,000 seniors out of 40 million actively chose to enroll in the card.

A little surprise when seniors in Ohio and throughout the country have found it confusing, have found it overwhelming, have found it way, way too bureaucratic, and have found it unreliable.

Under traditional Medicare, all of your benefits are available through one Medicare card that looks like this. But under the new program, seniors have to choose from a whole deck of cards. This card may be a discount for Fosamax. This card may be a discount for Zolof. This card may be a discount for Vioxx. This card may be a discount for Lipitor. This card might be a 12 percent discount. This card might be a 16 percent discount. This card might be a 19 percent discount.

But even with that confusion, Mr. Speaker, it gets worse because one card might cover your blood pressure medicine but not your heart medicine; the discounts published in the brochure you read, the 12 percent, the 14 percent, the 16 percent, the discounts you might read could be out of date by the time you get to the drug store.

In other words, under this Rube Goldberg kind of plan, you pick one of these, in Ohio, 53 cards, you pick one of these cards, you pay \$30, you are stuck with that card the whole year. Yet, the card maker, the card seller can change the discount, can change the drugs that are covered anytime during that 52 weeks. Mr. Speaker, that is not Medicare. This is Medicare. It is simple. It is reliable. It is universal.

The new program is having such problems that even one of its most widely accepted provisions is having trouble signing people up. The new law provides annual subsidies of up to \$600, a good idea, on drug purchases for some, unfortunately too limited, number of low-income seniors.

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But even that provision did not reach its target audience. Secretary Tommy Thompson says he is somewhat concerned that low-income seniors are not signing up. A lot of us are concerned in

this House that they are not signing up.

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and I have introduced a bill that would automatically enroll all seniors in the new low-income subsidies program.

Like Medicare itself, our proposal is simple; it is universal and reliable. Unfortunately, because it violates the Republican privatization way of doing things, they do not want to do it. So instead of actually fixing the problem by saying all seniors who are eligible get the \$600 automatically, the Bush administration's going to spend another \$4 million to advertise to try to encourage people to sign up. They have already spent up to \$80 million to tell seniors that this program is a good idea overall. Now they want to spend another \$4 million doing something that we ought to do to reach out to those seniors that need the drug benefit.

Earlier last year when the HHS auditors said the Republican bill would cost \$134 billion more than the White House said, the White House suppressed the estimate and gagged the auditor. When the initial reaction from seniors was less than enthusiastic, the Bush administration announced plans to spend, as I said earlier, \$80 million of our taxpayer dollars to educate seniors on why this bill is not really this bad after all. When news coverage of the program was not favorable enough, the Bush administration was undaunted. They just rolled out their own news stories, at taxpayers' expense, complete with fake anchor, phony interviewer, bogus reporter. It is not about substance; it is about image.

I think we can show that we can do better. House Republican leadership should pass the Dingell bill this week. It would begin to enroll those people who are eligible for the \$600 drug benefit, those lower-income seniors. We could pass it and get it over to the other body in plenty of time to have it on President Bush's desk by next week. I would love that to happen.

The choice, Mr. Speaker, again should be do we want one Medicare card that can give good drug discounts using the 40 million beneficiaries to negotiate a 40, 50, 60 percent discount for all seniors on this one card, or do we want to issue this privatized kind of Medicare with 53 cards, with 53 different plans, sold by private insurance, too confusing, too bureaucratic, and, frankly, a benefit that is barely worth it?

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my 5 minutes at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Our allegiances to our allies and friends change constantly. For decades, exiled Iraqi Ahmed Chalabi was our chosen leader to be in the new Iraq. Championed by Pentagon neocons and objected to by the State Department, Mr. Chalabi received more than \$100 million U.S. taxpayer dollars as our man designated to be the leader of a new Iraqi government.

But something happened on the way to the coronation. The State Department finally won out in its struggle with the Pentagon to dump Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress, delivering Iraq to a competing exiled group.

What a mess. No one should be surprised. Regime changes, whether by the CIA or by preemptive war, almost always go badly. American involvement in installing the Shah of Iran in the 1950s, killing Diem in South Vietnam in the 1960s, helping Osama bin Laden against the Soviets in the 1980s, assisting Saddam Hussein against Iran in the 1980s, propping up dictators in many Arab countries, and supporting the destruction of the Palestinian people all have had serious repercussions on American interests including the loss of American life. We have wasted hundreds of billions of dollars while the wounds in the Middle East continue to fester.

How many times have our friends become our enemies and our enemies our friends, making it difficult to determine which is which? Our new relationship with Qaddafi in Libya is an example of the silliness of this policy. Long-term interference in the internal affairs of other nations does not help us or those we support.

The invisible economic costs are enormous, but generally ignored. A policy of militarism and constant war has huge dollar costs, which contributes to the huge deficits, higher interest rates, inflation and economic dislocations. War cannot raise the standard of living for the average American. Participants in the military industrial complex do benefit, however.

The clear failure of the policy of foreign interventionism followed by our leaders for more than a hundred years should prompt a reassessment of our philosophy. Tactical changes, or relying on the U.N., will not solve these problems. Either way, the burden will fall on the American taxpayer and the American soldier.

The day is fast approaching when we no longer will be able to afford this burden. Currently, foreign governments are willing to loan us the money needed to finance our current account deficit and, indirectly, the cost of our